

REMARKS

Claims 5, 8 and 9 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over United States Patent Application Publication No. 2001/0008502 to Watanabe in view of United States Patent No. 4,420,780 to Deckert and further in view of United States Patent Application Publication No. 2002/0172136 to Tezuka et al. Claim 2 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe in view of Deckert and Tezuka et al. and further in view of United States Patent No. 5,253,232 to Akagi et al. Claims 3 and 4 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe in view of Deckert and Tezuka et al. and further in view of United States Patent No. 5,748,408 to Barrois et al. Claim 6 stands rejected under 35 U.S.C. §103(a) as being unpatentable over Watanabe in view of Deckert and further in view of Tezuka et al. Applicants respectfully traverse these rejections.

Applicants respectfully submit that the Tezuka et al. reference does not qualify as prior art with respect to the present application. In particular, the present application is a §371 application of PCT/JP02/00443, which was filed on January 22, 2002. Accordingly, the effective filing date of the present application is January 22, 2002. In contrast, the United States filing date of the Tezuka et al. reference is May 2, 2002. As the May 2, 2002 US filing date of the Tezuka et al. reference is after the January 22, 2002 effective filing date of the present application, the Tezuka et al. reference does not qualify as prior art with respect to the present application. Accordingly, as all of the above-named rejections rely on the Tezuka et al. reference, Applicants respectfully request the withdrawal of these rejections because the

Tezuka et al. reference does not qualify as prior art with respect to the above-named application.

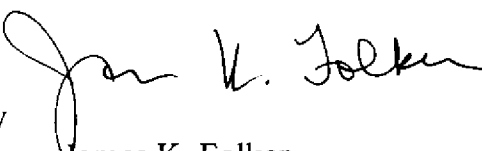
For all of the above reasons, Applicants request reconsideration and allowance of the claimed invention. Should the Examiner be of the opinion that a telephone conference would aid in the prosecution of the application, or that outstanding issues exist, the Examiner is invited to contact the undersigned attorney.

If a Petition under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response is required to make the attached response timely, it is hereby petitioned under 37 C.F.R. §1.136(a) for an extension of time for response in the above-identified application for the period required to make the attached response timely. The Commissioner is hereby authorized to charge any additional fees which may be required to this Application under 37 C.F.R. §§1.16-1.17, or credit any overpayment, to Deposit Account No. 07-2069.

Respectfully submitted,

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